Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A method of locking user input elements on a small computer device, the method comprising:

    receiving an internally generated locking signal;

    setting a locked flag to indicate the user input elements are locked; and

    ignoring input signals when the locked flag is set.

2. A method as defined in claim 1 further comprising:

    determining whether input signals relate to an unlock signal;

    if input signals do not relate to an unlock signal, ignore the input signal and

    if input signals relate to an unlock signal, unlocking the user input elements.

3. A method as defined in claim 2 wherein button presses create the input signals and wherein the act of determining whether input signals relate to an unlock signal comprises:

    determining whether the button presses occur within a predetermined time period.

4. A method as defined in claim 1 further comprising:

    displaying a message indicating that the user input elements are locked.

5. A method as defined in claim 1 wherein the small computer device comprises a timer and wherein the internally generated locking signal is generated following a predetermined time interval, the predetermined time interval managed by the timer.

6. A method as defined in claim 5 wherein the predetermined time interval relates to an automatic shutoff/sleep mode time interval.

7. A method as defined in claim 1 wherein the small computer device further comprises a calendar-type application program and wherein the internally generated locking

signal is generated by the calendar-type application program in response to a predetermined event.

       8.   A method as defined in claim 1 wherein the user input element is a touch screen.

       9.   A method as defined in claim 1 wherein the small computer device comprises a timer used to automatically place the device in sleep mode after a predetermined period of time, the device further comprises calendar-type application program that provides reminder notifications to the user and wherein the device awakes from sleep mode when a reminder occurs during sleep mode; the method further comprising:

           ignoring input signals to allow the device to return to sleep mode following a predetermined period of time.

       10.   A computer system comprising:

           user interface input elements;

           a processing unit for recognizing user interface input signals; and

           a locking application for locking the user interface elements, wherein the processing unit ignores user interface input signals when the user interface elements are locked and wherein the locking application receives an internally generated lock signal.

       11.   A computer program product readable by a computer device and encoding instructions for executing a computer process for notifying a user of notification events, the process comprising:

           receiving an internally generated locking signal;

           setting a locked flag to indicate the user input elements are locked; and

           ignoring input signals when the locked flag is set.

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12.   A computer program product as defined in claim 11 wherein the process further comprises:

determining whether input signals relate to an unlock signal;

if input signals do not relate to an unlock signal, ignore the input signal and

if input signals relate to an unlock signal, unlocking the user input elements.

13.   A computer program product as defined in claim 11 wherein the process further comprises:

displaying a message indicating that the user input elements are locked.

14.   A computer program product as defined in claim 11 wherein the computer device comprises a timer and wherein the internally generated locking signal is generated following a predetermined time interval, the predetermined time interval managed by the timer.

15.   A computer program product as defined in claim 14 wherein the predetermined time interval relates to an automatic shutoff/sleep mode time interval.

16.   A computer program product as defined in claim 15 wherein the computer device further comprises a calendar-type application program and wherein the internally generated locking signal is generated by the calendar-type application program in response to a predetermined event.

17.   A computer program product as defined in claim 11 wherein the user interface element is a touch screen.

18.   A computer program product as defined in claim 11 wherein the computer device comprises a timer used to automatically place the device in sleep mode after a predetermined period of time, the device further comprises calendar-type application program that provides

reminder notifications to the user and wherein the device awakes from sleep mode when a

5   reminder occurs during sleep mode; the process further comprising:

            ignoring input signals to allow the device to return to sleep mode following a

predetermined period of time.

Sub A1

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